

**SUMMARY OF THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
JULY 11, 2002**

The Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB) met on Thursday, July 11, 2002, at 1:30 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) during the Eighth Annual NELAC Meeting in Tampa, Florida. The meeting was led by its chair, Zonetta English of the Louisville and Jefferson County MSD. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. Minutes from the June 19, 2002, teleconference are given in Attachment C. The purpose of the meeting was to address items of importance identified in the meeting agenda.

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

The meeting was called to order by ELAB's Designated Federal Officer (DFO), Edward Kantor of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), who then introduced the Chairperson, Zonetta English. After the introduction of ELAB members, Ms. English welcomed the attendees and reviewed the minutes from the June 19, 2002, teleconference, which were reviewed and accepted as amended.

**REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS FROM THE JUNE 19, 2002, TELECONFERENCE**

1. Ms. English, Robert Wyeth, Michael Green, and Harry Gearhart met as a work group to discuss the ELAB list of recommendations. It was decided that the list was no longer applicable and would no longer be needed.
2. A work group of ELAB members had previously met to discuss forming a strategic business plan concerning funding for NELAC from the EPA. It was decided that the formation of a strategic business plan requires further research and study at this time.
3. ELAB has been discussing the issue of how to persuade more small/non-participating laboratories to participate in the NELAC program. Many comments were made concerning this issue and a motion was presented and carried to form a work group to address this matter. ELAB is requesting volunteers from ELAB and other committees or attendees to serve on this work group. If interested please contact Jerry Parr.
4. Ms. Hankins was to send a letter from the ACIL to each ELAB member. The letter has been sent, but has not been posted on the website.

5. Kirankumar Topudurti drafted an email to the NELAP Accrediting Authorities concerning the issues of application renewal timeframes and assessor training. Many comments were made regarding the issue of renewal timeframes and a formal request was made to the Accrediting Authorities to provide ELAB with data, based on their experience with timeframes within the last two years. The Accrediting Authorities should provide this information to ELAB before August 15, 2002. Many comments were made concerning assessor training and qualifications. It was decided that this issue required further discussion and would be addressed during the next teleconference.
6. Mr. Wyeth reported that he met with the Membership and Outreach Committee to discuss the issue of encouraging non-NELAC laboratories to participate in NELAC. Mr. Wyeth commented to the Membership and Outreach Committee that ELAB would be addressing this subject in a work group that they are forming and offered ELAB's support to the Membership and Outreach Committee to help in this endeavor. He also suggested that a member of the Membership and Outreach Committee serve on this work group that ELAB is forming.

## **NELAC RESTRUCTURING**

Many comments were presented concerning the restructuring of NELAC and, as a result, a motion was proposed and carried that: *ELAB will advise the EPA of their support for the changes to the Constitution and Bylaws during NELAC 8 to develop self sufficiency, ensure segregation of government and private sector involvement in NELAC, and to enhance private sector participation in standards development.*

## **ELAB OPEN FORUM ISSUES**

The first issue introduced from the open forum was concerning analyte groups and whether or not to keep them in the Standards. Discussion ensued and a motion was presented and carried that: *ELAB will form a work group to develop recommendations to the EPA on the issue of analyte groups for both the scope of accreditation and proficiency testing within NELAP.* It was requested that any comments concerning this matter be forwarded to Ms. English. The timeframe for forming this group will be discussed at the next teleconference. Ken Jackson commented that analyte groups would still be voted on at NELAC 8.

The second issue introduced concerned the communication mechanism between standards development and standards adoption organizations. Under the new proposed structure of NELAP/NELAC, a communication mechanism is needed to recommend suggestions to the standards development organization. Discussion ensued concerning this issue and a motion was presented and carried that: *ELAB will recommend to the EPA that a Board of Directors Open Forum be considered to hear NELAC issues, more appropriately addressed to the conference, that have previously been brought to ELAB that, according to their charter, they are not allowed to address.*

## **STATUS OF EPA SUPPORT TO NELAC**

Jeanne Hankins reported that NELAC had received the rest of their funding for the 2002 fiscal year which is significantly reduced by the previous year's funding. It was hoped that the national database would be completed by now; however, with reductions in the budget, the EPA has not been able to fully perform everything initially planned. A question was posed as to whether or not the budget is sufficient for the current NELAC needs. Ms. Hankins responded that there may not be enough funds to finish the database and that alternative solutions are being sought to accomplish it in a more efficacious manner. The budget for contractor support was also more than initially anticipated. Thus, action item #2 is reiterated, a strategic business plan for NELAC needs to be developed, taking into account the EPA's financial support, as well as status support for the program.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

An attendee commented that record number 29, in ELAB's table of recommendations, concerning the Department of Transportation (DOT), should not be dropped. A study was done and sent to the DOT and as soon as a letter is received from them it will be published on the website.

## **FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next teleconference will be held on August 21, 2002, at 11:00 a.m., Eastern Daylight Time (EDT).

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

**ACTION ITEMS  
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
JULY 11, 2002**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Date to be Completed</b>
1.	The formation of a strategic business plan concerning NELAC requires further study by the Committee.	OPEN
2.	ELAB will form a work group to address the issue of encouraging small/non-participating laboratories to participate in NELAC. ELAB is requesting volunteers from ELAB and the Membership and Outreach Committee, or attendees, to serve on this work group. If interested, please contact Jerry Parr.	OPEN
3.	A request was made to the Accrediting Authorities to provide ELAB with data, based on their experience with timeframes within the last two years. The Accrediting Authorities should provide this information to ELAB before August 15, 2002.	8/15/02
4.	ELAB will advise the EPA of their support for the changes to the Constitution and Bylaws during NELAC 8 to develop self-sufficiency, ensure segregation of government and private sector involvement in NELAC, and to enhance private sector participation in standards development.	OPEN
5.	ELAB will form a work group to develop recommendations to the EPA regarding analyte groups for both the scope of accreditation and proficiency testing within NELAP.	OPEN
6.	ELAB will recommend to the EPA that a Board of Directors Open Forum be considered to hear NELAC issues, more appropriately addressed to the conference, that have previously been brought to ELAB that, according to the charter, they are not allowed to address.	OPEN

**PARTICIPANTS  
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
JULY 11, 2002**

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**SUMMARY OF THE  
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
JUNE 19, 2002**

The Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB) met by teleconference on Wednesday, June 19, 2002, at 11:00 a.m., Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). Chairperson Zonetta English of Louisville and Jefferson County MSD led the meeting. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. The purpose of the meeting was to address items of importance identified below.

**INTRODUCTION**

As the Designated Federal Officer, Mr. Edward Kantor of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), was unable to attend the teleconference, Mr. Steve Billets took his place. Mr. Billets called the meeting to order and reviewed the ELAB Charter. Mr. Billets then presented Ms. English who introduced herself and took attendance. Joining the teleconference from the public sector was Ms. Jennifer Burpee with the Association of Public Health Laboratories, Andy Reign with Discovery Partners International, and Mr. Jim Pletl and Stacey Calacsan from Hampton Roads Sanitation District. Ms. English then reviewed the agenda and commenced the meeting.

**REVIEW OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The teleconference minutes of April 17, 2002, were reviewed and accepted as amended.

**STATUS OF NELAC RESTRUCTURING**

The proposed changes to the Constitution and Bylaws will be presented at NELAC 8 and will clarify the restructuring of NELAC.

**REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS FROM APRIL 17, 2002, MEETING**

1. Ms. English has contacted the Board of Directors to ask for participants in helping to draft a proposal regarding the EPA's role and support in the restructuring of NELAC. Though contact was made, a list of participants from the Board has not yet been compiled. Members of ELAB would like to meet during the Conference with Dr. Paul Kimsey for ideas to draft this strategic business plan.
2. Mr. Jerry Parr has not yet developed a plan for non-participating NELAC laboratories. He plans to tackle this issue during the next week with the help from Mr. Jim Pletl's letter.

3. Ms. Jeanne Hankins was not present at this teleconference to comment on whether or not the letter from the ACIL has been sent to Committee members. The Constitution and Bylaws have been posted on the NELAC website and is available for all to read.
4. Dr. Kirankumar Topudurti has contacted the AARB regarding the role it could assume in resolving the renewal timeframes of an application's review and status. One hundred percent of the regions have asked for extensions on this matter. Mr. Topudurti recommended meeting with the Accrediting Authority Workgroup during NELAC 8 to discuss their inspector's suggestions regarding this issue. He will draft a letter to send via email to each member of the NELAP AAs.
5. Mr. Pletl has sent his summary of suggestions and comments regarding membership from municipal and industrial laboratories in ELAB to Ms. English. This letter will be presented at NELAC 8.
6. Mr. Wyeth is currently in the process of drafting language regarding the Membership and Outreach Committee taking a more active role in encouraging non-NELAC laboratories to participate in NELAC. After comments/suggestions from ELAB, this language will be submitted to the Membership and Outreach Committee prior to NELAC 8.
7. Mr. Ed Kantor was not present at the meeting to comment on this action item. Since Dr. Topudurti is already responsible for drafting a letter to the Accrediting Authorities, he will assume this responsibility if not yet already completed by Mr. Kantor. His letter will then address the issues of renewal timeframes of applications as well as the degree of assessor training.

## **ELAB RECOMMENDATIONS**

None of the issues on this list were reviewed. Members agreed to meet during the Conference to look through this document and delete as many items as possible and to re-assess the open items.

## **NELAC 8 CONFERENCE**

***DETAILED AGENDA*** – Ms. English suggested that ELAB members attend the joint Program Policy and Structure/Transition meeting to be informed of the NELAC restructuring. This meeting takes place on Tuesday July 9, 2002, at 2:00 p.m. EDT and will have many presentations, including the proposed changes to the Constitution and Bylaws.

ELAB has an open forum on Tuesday July 9, 2002, at 5:00 p.m. EDT. Ms. English wanted to make members aware that this forum will affect what will be discussed at the meeting on Thursday.

***ARTICLES PROVIDED BY CAROL BATTERTON*** – Ms. English summarized the many comments she received regarding these articles. Members discussed these comments as well as their own concerns. Each individual member will review these articles along with what will be presented at

NELAC 8 and will discuss this issue further at a future teleconference. Drafting of a formal recommendation will be discussed and decided upon as well.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

***Email from the State of Florida*** – An email was received from the state of Florida containing a letter from an upset client. This letter stated the lack of expertise and unprofessionalism of a NELAC accredited laboratory handling this particular client. The members from ELAB believe that if the allegations were true they reflected a lack of confidence in the laboratory and suggested that specific details be forwarded to the primary accrediting authority for this laboratory. This brought up concerns about the adequacy of the NELAP accrediting program and if there might be other accredited laboratories with similar deficiencies. Dr. Topudurti volunteered to attach the letter from the client in Florida to the letter he is drafting to send to each NELAP AA, to allow the accrediting authorities to consider this information. Members supported this idea with the request of extracting the client's name, for privacy purposes. Dr. Topudurti will send this letter to each member of ELAB for comments and suggestions before he sends this out to the NELAP AAs.

#### **DETAILED AGENDA FOR NELAC 8**

Ms. English noted the items listed on the detailed agenda for NELAC 8 and asked for suggestion/comments. Mr. Pletl's letter will also be added to the agenda.

#### **FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next meeting will be held during NELAC 8. Tuesday, July 9, 2002, at 5:00 p.m. EDT will be the ELAB Open Forum and Thursday July 11, 2002, at 1:30 p.m. EDT will be the ELAB meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



**ACTION ITEMS**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**  
**JUNE 19, 2002**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Date to be Completed</b>
1.	Ms. English, Mr. Wyeth, Dr. Green, and Dr. Gearhart will get together at NELAC 8 and finalize the ELAB recommendations list. Completed items will be removed from the list leaving the list for open and/or inactive items. All ELAB members are welcomed to attend and help in this process.	NELAC 8
2.	Ms. English will set up a meeting during NELAC 8 with the work group of ELAB members as well as Dr. Kimsey to discuss putting together a strategic business plan.	ASAP
3.	Mr. Parr to form a work group to develop a strategic plan for non-participating NELAC laboratories. Mr. Parr will also set up a teleconference for discussion on this issue.	Ongoing
4.	Ms. Hankins will send out the letter from the ACIL to each member.	ASAP
5.	Dr. Topudurti to draft a letter to send to NELAP AAs regarding renewal timeframes of applications and degree of assessor training. A portion of the email from the state of Florida will also be attached. This letter will be sent to ELAB members for their review and comments prior to sending it to the NELAP AAs via email.	ASAP
6.	Mr. Wyeth to draft language regarding the Membership & Outreach Committee to take a more active role in encouraging non-NELAC laboratories to participate in NELAC.	ASAP

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**ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**  
**JUNE 19, 2002**

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